

The Journal of the Institute of Medical Ethics

The *Journal of Medical Ethics* was established in 1975, with a multidisciplinary editorial board, to promote the study of contemporary medico-moral problems. The editorial board has as its aims the encouragement of a high academic standard for this developing subject and the influencing of the quality of both professional and public discussion. The journal is published quarterly. The journal includes papers on all aspects of medical ethics, analyses ethical concepts and theories and features case conferences and comment on clinical practice. It includes book reviews and details of lectures and symposia on issues raised by the practice of medicine.

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Submitting manuscripts for publication

Papers submitted for publication should be sent in quadruplicate to: The Editor, *Journal of Medical Ethics*, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9LG. Rejected manuscripts are not returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, or international reply coupon. Papers should be in double-spaced typewriting on one side of the paper only. On a separate sheet a brief entry for 'Contributors to this issue' should be supplied, containing the title of the author's present post, degrees and/or professional qualifications, and any other relevant information.

Four copies of the journal will be sent to authors free of charge after their papers are published. Offprints of individual papers may be bought from The Publisher, *Journal of Medical Ethics*, Tavistock House East, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR.

In March 1981 the *JME* adopted a simplified 'Vancouver style' for references: details are given in various issues including December 1983, p 234. They are also available from the editorial office. The full text of the 'Vancouver Agreement' was published in the *British Medical Journal* in 1982; volume 284; 1766-70. As the 'Vancouver style' is incompatible with the long established style of references for legal articles, lawyers should use their own standard style, but avoid abbreviations so as to facilitate reference by others. The journal is multidisciplinary and papers should be in clear jargon-free English, accessible to any intelligent reader.

Notice to subscribers

The *Journal of Medical Ethics* is published quarterly. The annual subscription rates are £24.00 in the United Kingdom and Irish Republic, and US \$61.00 in all countries overseas. Payment for overseas subscriptions should be made in dollars, ie US \$61.00, or in your national currency based on the prevailing exchange rate to the US dollar of that currency, payable to Professional and Scientific Publications/JME A/c. Orders can also be placed locally with any leading subscription agent or bookseller. (For the convenience of readers in the USA subscription orders, with or without payment, can also be sent to: Professional and Scientific Publications, *British Medical Journal*, Box No. 560B, Kennebunkport, Maine 04046. All enquiries, however, must be addressed to the Publisher in London). All enquiries regarding air mail rates, single copies, advertisements, etc, should be sent to: The Publisher, *Journal of Medical Ethics*, Tavistock House East, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR.

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Thematic review and index

The thematic review of past issues appears in the June issue each year and an index to each volume appears in the December issue.

Contributors to this issue

Joan Bicknell is Professor of the Psychiatry of Mental Handicap at St George's Hospital Medical School, London.

A H Crisp is Chairman of the Education Committee of the General Medical Council.

P H Fentem is Vice Dean of Nottingham University Medical School.

William Finn is Associate Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology, New York Hospital – Cornell Medical College, New York and Honorary Gynaecologist-obstetrician and Chairman, Medical Ethics Committee, North Shore University Hospital, Manhasset, NY.

The Most Reverend J S Habgood is Archbishop of York.

John Happel has been a rural GP for 30 years. He was chairman of the British Medical Association's Central Ethical Committee 1970–77 and Chairman of the General Medical Council's Standards Committee 1979–1984.

John Havard is the Secretary of the British Medical Association, a Barrister-at-Law and President of the British Academy of Forensic Sciences.

Susan Law is a serving officer in the Royal Air Force. She has been active in medical politics since she was an undergraduate and still plays an active role within the British Medical Association.

Jean Robinson is past Chairman of the Patients Association and a lay member of the General Medical Council. She is a Trustee of the Society for the Prevention of Asbestosis and Industrial Diseases.

William Ruddick is Professor of Philosophy at New York University and Director, Philosophy and Medicine Program, New York University School of Medicine, New York, NY.

Edward Shotter is Director of the Institute of Medical Ethics and a Prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral, London.

Andrew Smith is a senior partner in a group practice in Whickham and a part-time Lecturer in Family Medicine at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. One of his responsibilities as part of Newcastle's integrated curriculum is to teach medical ethics to medical students at an early stage in their undergraduate career and demonstrate that the practice of medicine is more than a scientific discipline.

Margaret Stacey is Professor of Sociology at Warwick University. She served on the General Medical Council from 1975–84 and was a member of the Michael Davies Committee on Hospital Complaints Procedure, 1970–72.

R B Welbourn is Emeritus Professor of Surgical Endocrinology, Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Visiting Scholar, University of California, Los Angeles and Chairman of the Governing Body of the Institute of Medical Ethics.

Sir Gordon Wolstenholme is Harveian Librarian at the Royal College of Physicians and was formerly Director of the CIBA Foundation and President of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Sir John Walton is President of the General Medical Council.

Update

Guidelines for ethics committees

A booklet entitled *Guidelines on the Practice of Ethics Committees in Medical Research* is now available from the Royal College of Physicians, 11 St Andrews Place, Regents Park, London NW1 4LE.

It covers, amongst other things, objectives of ethics committees, the definition of a research project, mode of working, confidentiality, sanctions and the responsibility of clinicians.

A section on consent offers guidelines on: trivial and minimal risk procedures; more substantial procedures; witnessed consent; healthy volunteers and patient volunteers; subjects whose capacity to give consent is impaired; written consent; documentation of consent and research without consent of the patient.

Such information as the college has on how ethics committees work implies that the practice of committees is extremely variable, 'not only due to natural differences of opinion, but due to disagreement about, and sometimes even unawareness of, what issues fall within the scope of ethical reviews; in particular there may be discrepancies between institutions where research is an occasional or minor activity and those where research is a major activity.

'The college considers that the time has come when it would be useful to summarise aspects of the practice of and the problems faced by ethics committees'. It doesn't expect to have provided all the answers to all the problems that beset such committees by publication of the guidelines but hopes that many of the issues are usefully discussed.

Health care and the humanities conference

The Association for Faculty in the Medical Humanities, a section of the Society for Health and Human Values, is planning a conference to be held during the annual meeting of the Association for American Medical Colleges, October 26-31, 1985, in Washington DC. Papers with a maximum reading time of 20 minutes on any topic relating health care and traditional concerns of the humanities will be considered. The papers will receive blind review, so the author's name should appear only on a cover page. The deadline for receipt of essays is May 31, 1985. Five copies should be sent to David Barnard, PhD, Institute for Medical Humanities, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas 77550.

Handling life: clues to understanding and caring

A conference on the possibilities of medical intervention at the beginning and the end of life will be held at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts from the 23-26 July. The chairman will be Professor Gordon Dunstan, Research Fellow, Department of Theology, Exeter University. Among the speakers will be the Revd Dr Kenneth Boyd, Scottish Director, Institute of Medical Ethics; Professor Eric Wilkes, Professor of Community Care and General Practice, Sheffield University and Medical Director of a hospice, and Lady Oppenheimer, a prominent writer on Christian ethics and philosophical theology.

The cost of the conference including accommodation is £46. Details from: Modern Churchmen's Union Conference Secretary, 2 St Peter's Close, Stonnall, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 9EN.

Lectures and symposia

Tuesday 16 April

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP ILLUSTRATED SYMPOSIUM: BACK TO BEDLAM: CAN WE MANAGE WITHOUT MENTAL HOSPITALS? 5.45 pm, King's College Hospital

Thursday 18 April

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP ILLUSTRATED SYMPOSIUM: HAVE WOMEN A SPECIAL ROLE IN MEDICINE? 5.45 pm, The London Hospital

Tuesday 23 April

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP ILLUSTRATED LECTURE: PARA-PSYCHOLOGY: A QUESTION OF PERCEPTION? 5.45 pm, The Middlesex Hospital

Thursday 25 April

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: KILLING AND LETTING DIE: A NECESSARY CLINICAL DISTINCTION? 5.45 pm, Royal Free Hospital

Monday 29 April

EDINBURGH MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: PRIVATE HOSPITALS - SALVATION OF THE NHS? 5.15 pm, Meadows lecture theatre, Medical School, Teviot Place

Tuesday 30 April

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES: IS MEDICAL ANATOMY AT STAKE? 5.45 pm, St Bartholomew's Hospital

Wednesday 1 May

ABERDEEN MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: HOMEOPATHY: A CHALLENGE IN MEDICINE. 7.30 pm, Anatomy lecture theatre, Anatomy Department, Marischal College

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM:

THE ETHICS OF RESEARCH ON CHILDREN. 5.45 pm, Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street

Thursday 2 May

BRISTOL MEDICAL GROUP: DISEASES OF CIVILISATION. 7.30 pm, Lecture theatre, Bristol Maternity Hospital

BRISTOL MEDICAL GROUP will hold a series of five student seminars on CARE OF THE DYING during Spring 1985. All students concerned with caring for the terminally ill and the bereaved are welcome. Contact Sue McMullen, telephone Bristol 22041, ext 2736

EDINBURGH MEDICAL GROUP LUNCHTIME SEMINAR: THE TEACHING HOSPITAL AND AN AGEING POPULATION. 1-2 pm, West medical lecture theatre, Royal Infirmary, Lauriston Place

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: UNEMPLOYMENT AND ILL-HEALTH. 6 pm, St George's Hospital, Tooting

Tuesday 7 May

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP LECTURE: MARITAL BREAKDOWN: A CONTEMPORARY DISEASE. 5.45 pm, St Mary's Hospital

Wednesday 8 May

SHEFFIELD MEDICAL GROUP MEETING: EUTHANASIA. 8.00 pm, Lecture theatre 3, medical school, Beech Hill Road

Thursday 9 May

DUNDEE MEDICAL GROUP MEETING: THE ELDERLY: HOME OR HOSPITAL? 5.30 pm, Lecture theatre 1, Ninewells Hospital and Medical School

EDINBURGH MEDICAL GROUP LUNCHTIME SEMINAR: HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH? 1-2 pm, West medical lecture theatre, Royal Infirmary, Lauriston Place

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP ILLUSTRATED SYMPOSIUM: CAN DOCTORS BE INDIFFERENT TO TORTURE? 5.45 pm, St Thomas's Hospital

Monday 13 May

EDINBURGH MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: EUTHANASIA. 5.15 pm, Meadows lecture theatre, Medical School, Teviot Place

Tuesday 14 May

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: CANCER AND PERSONALITY: IS THERE A CONNECTION? 5.45 pm, University College Hospital

Thursday 16 May

EDINBURGH MEDICAL GROUP LUNCHTIME SEMINAR: WHO NEEDS TO BE IN HOSPITAL AND HOW DO WE DECIDE? 1-2 pm, West medical lecture theatre, Royal Infirmary, Lauriston Place

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: THE ETHICS OF GIVING MEDICAL EVIDENCE TO THE COURTS. 6.30 pm, Westminster Hospital

LEICESTER MEDICAL GROUP SYMPOSIUM: Artificial motherhood - moral consensus or moral confusion? 5.30 pm, Lecture theatre, Clinical Sciences Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Wednesday 29 May

SHEFFIELD MEDICAL GROUP MEETING: PATIENT COMMITTEES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS. 8.00 pm, Lecture theatre 3, Medical School, Beech Hill Road

Wednesday 12 June

SHEFFIELD MEDICAL GROUP MEETING: THE ETHICS OF CLINICAL TRIALS. 8.00 pm, Lecture theatre 3, Medical School, Beech Hill Road

Medical groups

ABERDEEN MEDICAL GROUP

Mrs Elaine Foreman, Clinical Psychology Dept, Elmhill House, Royal Cornhill Hospital, Cornhill Road, Aberdeen

BIRMINGHAM MEDICAL GROUP

Mr R Sawers, Birmingham Maternity Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TG

BRISTOL MEDICAL GROUP

Mr Christopher Spencer-Jones, 54 North Road, St Andrews, Bristol BS6 5AF

CAMBRIDGE MEDICAL GROUP

Mr Patrick Doyle, Department of Urology, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Hill's Road, Cambridge

CARDIFF MEDICAL GROUP

Mr Mike Spencer, Principal Pharmacist, University Hospital of Wales, Heath Park, Cardiff CF 4XN

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Dr David B Walsh, Consultant in Biochemical Medicine, Ninewells Hospital, Dundee

EDINBURGH MEDICAL GROUP

Mrs Maureen S Macmillan, 1 Bristo Square, Edinburgh EH8 9AL

GLASGOW MEDICAL GROUP

Mr Sam Galbraith, Institute of Neurological Sciences, Southern General Hospital, Glasgow

LEEDS MEDICAL GROUP

Mr Bob Wright, Charge Nurse, 23 Woodhill Gardens, Leeds LS16 7DD

Dr Steve Conway, Registrar/Lecturer, Department of Paediatrics, Clarendon Wing, Leeds General Infirmary

LEICESTER MEDICAL GROUP

Dr Liam Donaldson, Department of Community Health, Clinical Sciences Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary, PO Box 65, Leicester LE2 7LX

LIVERPOOL MEDICAL GROUP

Mr Roger Cudmore, Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Eaton Road, Liverpool

LONDON MEDICAL GROUP

Miss Susan French, Room 68, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9LG

MANCHESTER MEDICAL GROUP

Dr Mary Lobjoit, Student Health Centre, Crawford House, Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9QS

NEWCASTLE MEDICAL GROUP

Dr David Gregory, Department of Family and Community Medicine, The Medical School, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU

OXFORD MEDICAL FORUM

Mr Andrew West, Osler House, John Radcliffe Hospital, Headington, Oxford

SHEFFIELD MEDICAL GROUP

Mr David Watmough, Flat 3, 16 Beech Hill Road, Broomhill, Sheffield S10 2SB

SOUTHAMPTON MEDICAL GROUP

Dr R Grimble, Department of Nutrition, Medical and Biological Sciences Building, Bassett Crescent East, Bassett, Southampton SO9 3TU

Medical groups associated with the Institute of Medical Ethics have been established in British university teaching hospitals. Each academic year they arrange programmes of lectures and symposia on issues raised by the practice of medicine which concern other disciplines. Although these programmes are addressed primarily to medical, nursing and other hospital students they are open to all members of the medical, nursing and allied professions. There is no fee for attendance. Lecture lists are available by direct application to the appropriate co-ordinating secretary named above. A stamped addressed A4 envelope would be appreciated.

KING'S COLLEGE LONDON
University of London

Centre of Medical Law and Ethics

Postgraduate Diploma in Medical Ethics and Law

Entry October 1985

Applications are invited for this one-year Diploma course, commencing in October 1985.

The course aims to further the understanding of those whose work brings them into contact with medical ethics and law and those who wish to embark on further study or research. The course is open to all those who have a first degree in a relevant discipline, eg medicine, law, philosophy and theology.

Further details from the Postgraduate Secretary, Faculty of Laws, King's College, London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS.

Oxford Science Studies Summer Seminar

13-27 July, 1985 at The Queen's College, Oxford.

13-20 July: **Scientific Controversies**

Guest lecturers will include: Harry Collins, David Elliott, John Hasted, Mary Hesse, Roger Smith and Tom Stonier.

20-27 July: **Medicine, Ethics and Society**

Sponsored jointly by the University of Oxford Department for External Studies and the Hastings Center in New York, the seminar will cover a wide range of issues including the doctor-patient relationship, clinical trials, and new reproductive technologies such as *in vitro* fertilization.

Guest lecturers will include: Daniel Callahan, Arthur Caplan, Raanan Gillon, Carol Levine, Michael Lockwood, and Lady Mary Warnock.

The two weeks may be attended either separately or in combination.

The cost per week (inclusive of seminar fee and accommodation in The Queen's College) is £175 (UK and other EEC residents)/£300 (residents of all other countries). Some bursaries are available for UK residents.

Write for further information to: Dr. J.R. Durant, Room 5.27, Department for External Studies, University of Oxford, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA. Tel. Oxford (0865) 52901.

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Edited in the University of St. Andrews by an Editorial Board

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Evolutionary Epistemology and Ontological Realism

Thomas Tymoczko
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DISCUSSIONS

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Institute of Medical Ethics

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The institute has been set up by the Society for the Study of Medical Ethics as a centre for research, education and information. It is financed by grants from charitable and government sources and from members' subscriptions.

The Institute of Medical Ethics is an independent, non-partisan organisation for the multidisciplinary study of medico-moral issues raised by the practice of medicine.

The institute aims to influence the quality of both professional and public discussion of medico-moral questions; to promote the study of medical ethics; to ensure a high academic standard for this developing subject; to encourage a multidisciplinary approach to discussion of the consequences of clinical practice; to stimulate research in specific problems, and to remain non-partisan and independent of all interest groups and lobbies.

The institute undertakes research on medico-moral questions, sponsors a major educational programme and provides an information service for members.

So far two reports have been published on: *The Ethics of Resource Allocation in Health Care* by Kenneth Boyd and *Dilemmas of Dying* by Ian Thompson.

Both are published by the Edinburgh University Press. Future reports will cover the ethics of clinical research investigations on children; public and professional attitudes to medical ethics, and teaching medical ethics.

The institute derives from the London Medical Group, a student group for the study of issues raised by the practice of medicine which, since 1963, has arranged a comprehensive programme of lectures and symposia on medico-moral issues raised by the practice of medicine. Similar groups associated with the institute have been established in university teaching hospitals at Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford, Sheffield and Southampton.

Membership of the institute is open to all those who work in the medical and allied professions. Members receive a monthly briefing on current developments, the Bulletin of the Institute of Medical Ethics.

Institute of Medical Ethics
Tavistock House North,
Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9LG

Tel: 01-387 8132



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